

# PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

CANADA'S PROGRESS ON SUPPORTING  
LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBALLY SINCE 2015

# ÉVALUATION DES PROGRÈS

PROGRÈS RÉALISÉS PAR LE CANADA POUR APPUYER LES  
DROITS DES PERSONNES LGBTI DANS LE MONDE DEPUIS 2015



RÉSEAU  
DIGNITÉ  
DIGNITY  
NETWORK

## OVERVIEW

In summer 2015, over 130 Canadian civil society organizations signed onto a Call to Action on how Canada could defend and promote human rights for LGBTI people around the world. This Call to Action was provided to all Canadian political parties in advance of the 2015 federal election and then officially submitted to the new Canadian government in February 2016. The Call to Action's 22 recommendations had provided a road-map for our work with the Canadian government in four thematic areas: supporting human rights defenders, enhancing funding, utilizing diplomacy, and supporting refugees.

Dignity Network has now completed a detailed assessment of our recommendations to the Government of Canada. This document lays out each of the 22 recommendations alongside our network's assessment of progress: no progress, initiated, some progress, significant progress, or unknown. A rationale for each assessment is provided in the "examples/comments" column. This assessment was conducted over spring and summer 2019 by a working group of Dignity Network organizations and volunteers. Canadian and international organizations reviewed these recommendations at our roundtable meetings in Ottawa in May 2019 and versions were also circulated to our liaison staff at Global Affairs Canada and Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada for review and input. Our network has integrated this progress assessment into our next iteration of recommendations for 2019-2023; these can be found in a separate document.

Overall, our network is pleased with the progress of the past four years. Seventeen of our recommendations have seen some or significant progress, and three have been initiated. Two recommendations have not seemed to move forward or are unclear.

We believe that this progress over the past four years advances Canada's role in supporting human rights for LGBTI people globally. We also note that further action is needed on many of these recommendations and that the progress identified in this report requires ongoing work to support implementation. We look forward to collaborating with our partners both at home and abroad in working to advance equal rights around the world.

Dignity Network Steering Committee  
October 7, 2019

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT	PROGRESS OVERVIEW	EXAMPLES / NOTES / COMMENTS
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**REACH OUT TO SUPPORT LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

<p><b>1</b> Speak out publicly in support of governments that take positive action on LGBTI human rights.</p>	 <p><b>SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>Positive statement in support of India's decriminalization of homosexuality.</p> <p>Statement by Organization of American States (OAS) LGBTI Core Group in support of Belizean Court Decision.</p> <p>Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) Statement on Forced Anal Examinations.</p> <p>Congratulatory tweets issued by Canada in response to positive events like decriminalization in Angola, same-sex marriage in Australia.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Work with human rights defenders, faith leaders and civil society around the world to advance LGBTI human rights.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>Many Canadian embassies have been working with LGBTI human rights defenders and organizations, and there are many examples of strong collaboration. However, relationships with LGBTI communities in regions outside of the capital in which a mission is based are considerably less strong. These relationships are especially tenuous in countries where Canada does not have an embassy (for example, Uganda), which presents a significant shortcoming in Canada's ability to engage with some LGBTI communities who face significant risk.</p>



RECOMMENDATION TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT	PROGRESS OVERVIEW	EXAMPLES / NOTES / COMMENTS
<p><b>3</b> Strengthen the capacity of both LGBTI and non-LGBTI organizations to engage directly in human rights work.</p>	 <p><b>SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>The Peace Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP) issued a \$1m call in 2019 to support LGBTI human rights in conflict and post-conflict contexts.</p> <p>In 2019, Canada announced \$30 million in international assistance funding over 5 years plus \$10 million per year in subsequent years, to advance human rights and improve socio-economic outcomes for LGBTI people in developing countries.</p>

#### ENHANCE FUNDING TO SUPPORT LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBALLY

<p><b>4</b> Integrate LGBTI rights into various other GAC funding programs addressing poverty, conflict, health, etc.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>In August 2018, Canada committed to addressing challenges that LGBTI communities face in contributing to and benefiting from ODA, including by addressing gaps in its discourse and programming approaches, meaningfully engaging with LGBTI civil society, internal capacity building, data disaggregation and investment tracking. Ongoing engagement is required to ensure that these commitments are implemented.</p> <p>Also, given concerns regarding how other funds (e.g. Women’s Voice and Leadership) have not always effectively met grassroots organizations’ needs, ongoing attention is required to improve the quality and accessibility of ODA.</p> <p>The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFI) has continued to support LGBTI civil society through Canadian embassies, although LGBTI human rights are not expressly a priority.</p> <p>Further work is also required to ensure that CFI is accessible to activists and organizations who are unable to legally incorporate.</p>
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**RECOMMENDATION TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT**

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**EXAMPLES / NOTES / COMMENTS**

**ENHANCE FUNDING TO SUPPORT LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBALLY**

<p><b>5</b> Strengthen LGBTI movement building globally, including health, community development and faith engagement.</p>	 <p><b>SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>See recommendations 3 and 4 above.</p>
<p><b>6</b> Ensure that Canadian ODA does not go to organizations working against human rights for LGBTI people.</p>	 <p><b>UNKNOWN</b></p>	<p>Federal funding, including ODA, has been invested in Canadian organizations that have advocated for or contributed to intolerance, hatred, and/or discrimination toward LGBTI people abroad.</p> <p>Some like-minded countries have anti-discrimination provisions in their ODA and/or public procurement policies.</p> <p>We are not aware of any policies or provisions that ensure Canada's ODA does not promote intolerance/discrimination and does not run counter to Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.</p>
<p><b>7</b> Mainstream LGBTI rights into ODA reporting mechanisms.</p>	 <p><b>INITIATED</b></p>	<p>As referenced under recommendation 4, Canada has committed to undertaking better data disaggregation and investment tracking in order to address the challenges that LGBTI communities face in contributing and benefiting from sustainable development and humanitarian assistance efforts. Ongoing research is required to assess the implementation and effectiveness of these measures.</p>
<p><b>8</b> Integrate LGBTI rights into various other ODA programs, addressing poverty, conflict, health etc.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>See recommendations 4 and 5.</p>

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE  
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**PROGRESS  
OVERVIEW**

**EXAMPLES / NOTES /  
COMMENTS**

**USE DIPLOMACY TO DEFINE A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS OF LGBTI PEOPLE**

**9** Use bilateral engagement to encourage end of anti-LGBTI laws.



**SOME  
PROGRESS**

Canada has responded quickly to anti-LGBTI crackdowns or anti-gay laws in contexts like Azerbaijan, Brunei, and Chechnya.

Note: Some of Canada's bilateral engagement can't be publicly disclosed - while it's not possible to authoritatively report out on specific instances, Canada does seem to be actively and quietly engaged in other contexts/ countries of concern where public actions may be less appropriate.

**10** In countries where there are significant violations of LGBTI human rights, work with local human rights defenders on best approaches with governments.



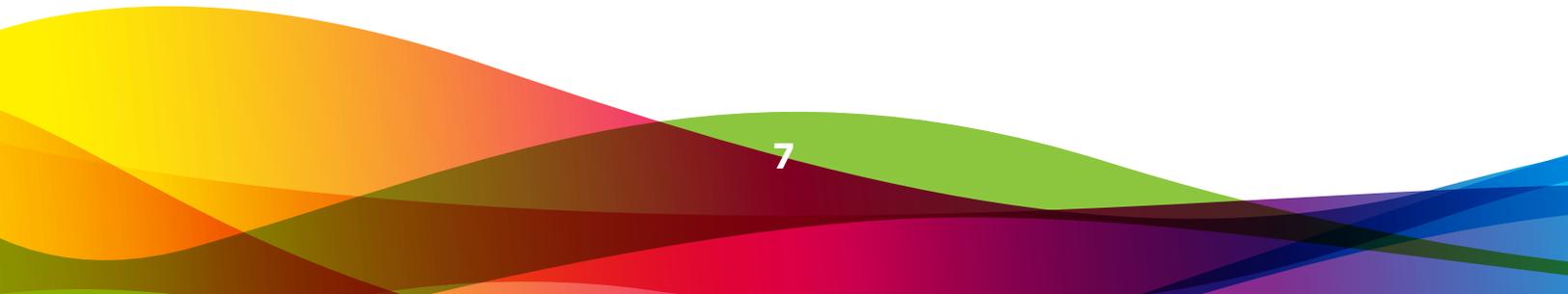
**SOME  
PROGRESS**

Many Canadian embassies have supported local LGBTI human rights defenders, and have demonstrated support for protection/promotion of LGBTI human rights through meetings with activists, cultural engagement (e.g. film screenings), and hosting Canadian LGBT leaders to share experiences and best practices.

However, as referenced in recommendation 2, Canadian missions' relationships with human rights defenders outside of the city in which a mission is based are often limited.

Canada has issued more recommendations related to sexual orientation and gender identity than any other UN member states within the UN Universal Periodic Review. These recommendations to other UN member states generally involve consultation with local civil society organizations.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT	PROGRESS OVERVIEW	EXAMPLES / NOTES / COMMENTS
<p><b>11</b> Develop tools for Canadian missions abroad on supporting local LGBTI human rights defenders.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>The Voices at Risk Guidelines have been updated to include specific guidance to Canadian missions on being more inclusive of LGBTI human rights defenders. These guidelines must be accompanied by a strong implementation plan to ensure they are consistently implemented across missions and make a marked difference in the lives of human rights defenders at risk.</p> <p>While some Canadian missions' staff receive training related to LGBTI rights, further effort is required to ensure that all Canadian missions are familiar with both Canada's position on LGBTI rights and the local context of the countries to which a mission is accredited.</p>
<p><b>12</b> Create an inter-departmental mechanism within GAC and with other departments on global LGBTI human rights.</p>	 <p><b>INITIATED</b></p>	<p>Coordination between various departments and ministries has improved with the establishment of the federal LGBTI Secretariat, but there is no visible inter-departmental mechanism around international LGBTI issues.</p>

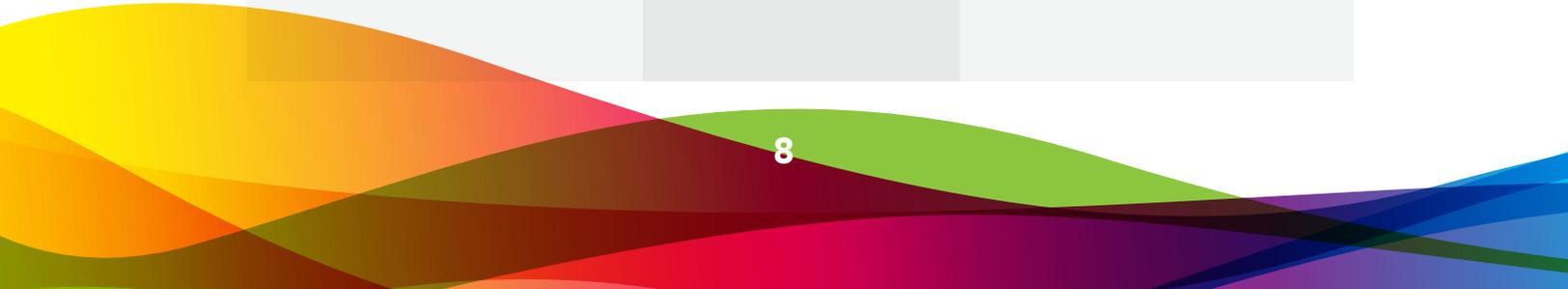


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<p><b>13</b> Enhance the human rights capacity of GAC to engage on LGBTI human rights and development with dedicated staff.</p>	 <p><b>NO PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>While there had been an additional staff person hired to coordinate the ERC in 2018, this position has not been extended. The Global Issues and Development branch (which leads on international assistance and LGBTI issues) and the International Security and Political Affairs branch (which leads on foreign policy and LGBTI issues) each have a point person whose job includes, among other responsibilities, LGBTI rights/inclusion. Ongoing effort is required to expand the capacity and skill of GAC officials to engage on LGBTI human rights and development (for example, through hiring more individuals with expertise on LGBTI rights, and through providing training to GAC officials).</p>
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<p><b>14</b> Monitor the human rights situation for LGBTI people around the world, particularly the state of legislation that criminalizes LGBTI people.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>Voices at Risk guidelines encourage embassies to gather information and report, and many embassies appear actively apprised of LGBTI human rights situations. Further research is required to confirm whether reporting on LGBTI human rights situations is systematized across Canadian missions.</p>
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<p><b>15</b> Work with like-minded countries around the world to support LGBTI human rights.</p>	 <p><b>SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>Canada joined and then co-chaired (with Chile) the Equal Rights Coalition.</p> <p>Canada joined the UN Core Group on LGBTI rights along with Ecuador.</p> <p>Canada has engaged on supporting LGBTI human rights at the Commonwealth and the OSCE.</p> <p>Canada is a founding member and previous chair of the OAS LGBTI Core Group.</p>
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<p><b>16</b> Support the work of the UN and other global and regional mechanisms in documenting and addressing human rights violations.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>Canada supports some World Bank policy and programming related to social inclusion, with a focus on LGBTI persons, Indigenous persons, and persons with disabilities. Canada has also supported the Royal Commonwealth Society in developing legal tools to help improve the legal standing of LGBTI persons.</p> <p>The recently announced funding commitment of \$30 million over 5 years plus \$10 million in subsequent years for LGBTI development assistance offers an opportunity to financially support the work of some multilateral entities.</p>

**SUPPORT LGBTI REFUGEES SEEKING ASYLUM IN CANADA AND GLOBALLY**

<p><b>17</b> Expand and make permanent the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program.</p>	 <p><b>SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>In June 2019, the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program was made into an ongoing five-year program with a significant increase in funding to support up to 50 LGBTI refugees a year.</p>
<p><b>18</b> Recognize the need for priority processing of LGBTI people who are “at risk” or in need of protection under the “Urgent Protection Program.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>There has been some acknowledgment from IRCC about the unique vulnerability of LGBTI persons in the refugee system, and consultations have taken place to address these issues. IRCC has yet to commit to initiatives that would effectively respond to crisis situations where urgent protection is needed.</p>

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<p><b>19</b> Reduce wait times for private sponsorship applications so that time from application to arrival is less than one year.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>IRCC has made progress in addressing the grave inequities and lengthy processing times for private sponsorship applications that impacted sponsorship from African countries. In addition, a pilot using BVOR sponsorships has been effective. IRCC has proven its capacity to process private sponsorships in less than 12 months in some regions, and this should be a standard across the globe. Continued concerted effort is needed.</p>
<p><b>20</b> LGBTI refugee claimants in Canada, like all refugee claimants, should be eligible for basic and extended healthcare through the Interim Federal health Program, for which funding should be fully restored.</p>	 <p><b>SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>In 2016, funding for interim federal health program was fully restored. In 2019, the federal government also ended the Designated Country of Origin policy that created a two-tier refugee system, denying healthcare and right to appeal to some refugees. DN remains concerned about threats to equity and access in Canada's inland refugee system.</p>
<p><b>21</b> Broaden private sponsorship programs to include countries with high levels of LGBTI persecution.</p>	 <p><b>SOME PROGRESS</b></p>	<p>The expansion and extension of the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program is a critical step in ensuring private sponsorship is responsive to LGBTI asylum seekers in high risk regions. However, there is a need for robust collaboration with CSOs to develop focused solutions for key regions.</p> <p>There has been some initial work done here, but much further work is necessary.</p>
<p><b>22</b> Offer asylum to LGBTI human rights defenders and people targeted by their governments.</p>	 <p><b>INITIATED</b></p>	<p>Canada is offering protection to LGBTI refugees through inland, government-assisted and sponsorship pathways. However, those who most need protection are often unable to cross borders. Canada has yet to develop a proactive policy for LGBTI human rights defenders who are internally displaced and unable to exit their country of origin safely.</p>